

Message Text

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S E C R E T MBFR VIENNA 0366

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJ: MBFR: INFORMAL SESSION WITH EASTERN REPRESENTATIVES
OF JULY 6, 1976

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN THE JULY 6 INFORMAL SESSION OF THE
VIENNA TALKS, THE ALLIES WERE REPRESENTED BY THE CANADIAN REP,
UK REP AND US REP, AND EAST BY SOVIET REPS KHLESTOV AND
AMB NICHOLAI CONSTANTINOVICH TARASOV REPEAT TARASOV, WHO WAS
PRESENTED AS JUST HAVING JOINED THE SOVIET DELEGATION,
CZECHOSLOVAK REP LAHODA, AND POLISH REP DABROWA.

2. IN THE SESSION, EASTERN REPS SOUGHT TO EMPHASIZE THE
IMPORTANCE OF THE FEB 19 PROPOSAL. THEY EXPRESSED CONCERN AT
WESTERN UNWILLINGNESS TO GIVE SPECIFIC GUARANTEES FOR STAGE TWO
REDUCTIONS, CLAIMING THIS ATTITUDE EVIDENCED A DESIRE ON THE
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PART OF THE NON-US DIRECT PARTICIPANTS TO AVOID REDUCTIONS.

EASTERN REPS CLAIMED THAT THE WESTERN INSISTENCE ON ASYMMETRICAL REDUCTIONS IN THE FACE OF THE FACT THAT THERE WAS AN EQUILIBRIUM OF FORCES IN THE AREA PROVIDED EVIDENCE OF A WESTERN INTENTION TO ACHIEVE UNILATERAL GAIN THROUGH THE VIENNA TALKS.

3. POLISH REP REFERRED TO QUESTIONS ON EASTERN DATA RAISED BY UK REP IN JUNE 29 INFORMAL SESSION. HE REITERATED THAT THE EAST EXPECTED WESTERN PARTICIPANTS TO TABLE UPDATED DATA ON THE MANPOWER OF THE NATO FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE BEFORE THE DISCUSSION OF DATA COULD BEGIN, BUT HE WOULD STATE IN RESPONSE TO THESE QUESTIONS THAT EASTERN DATA "TOOK INTO ACCOUNT ALL CATEGORIES OF MILITARY PERSONNEL DEPLOYED IN THE AREA", AND SAID THIS MEANT THAT THE EAST HAD "TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION" VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS REGARDING THE FORCE DEFINITION ISSUE. HE DID NOT FURTHER CLARIFY THIS AMBIGUOUS STATEMENT. POLISH REP STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT THE EAST WAS UNWILLING TO ANSWER ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS ON EASTERN DATA UNTIL THE WEST HAD TABLED ITS DATA AND THAT ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS WOULD BE SIMPLY MET BY REPETITION OF THESE POINTS.

4. WESTERN REPS MADE THE POINT THAT THE EAST WAS UNDERVALUING THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OBLIGATIONS PROPOSED BY THE WEST FOR ITSELF, THAT THE GEOGRAPHIC FACTOR WAS ONE WHICH SHOULD AND MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN EVALUATING THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BURDEN OF OBLIGATIONS FOR EACH SIDE. THEY SAID THAT RECENT EASTERN STATEMENTS CONFIRMED THE WESTERN ASSESSMENT THAT, IN THE FEB 19 EASTERN PROPOSAL, THE EAST WAS ASKING NON-US WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS TO SUBSCRIBE IN A FIRST STAGE AGREEMENT TO THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE EASTERN REDUCTION PROGRAM.

5. KHLESTOV OPENED THE SESSION WITH AN EFFORT TO PROVE THAT EASTERN FEB 19 PROPOSAL REPRESENTED A GENUINE MOVE AWAY FROM THE ORIGINAL EASTERN POSITION THAT ALL DIRECT PARTICIPANTS SHOULD REDUCE SIMULTANEOUSLY. HE CLAIMED IT WAS THE WEST WHICH WAS ATTEMPTING TO GAIN EASTERN AGREEMENT IN A FIRST PHASE AGREEMENT TO ALL THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE WESTERN REDUCTION APPROACH.

6. US REP MADE THE POINT THAT THE EAST WAS STILL FAILING TO PROPERLY EVALUATE THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WESTERN
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DEC 16 OFFER TO WITHDRAW AND LIMIT US NUCLEARS AND THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ENTIRE WESTERN REDUCTION PACKAGE. WHEN THE CORRECT, COMPREHENSIVE METHOD WAS USED TO EVALUATE THIS PACKAGE, IT WOULD BE APPARENT THAT ITS MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE WAS VERY GREAT AND THAT WHAT THE WEST WAS OFFERING WAS AT LEAST AS MUCH AS IT WAS ASKING FOR FROM THE EAST.

7. CZECHOSLOVAK REP AGAIN CLAIMED THE EAST ONLY WANTED A

GENERAL COMMITMENT ON TIMING AND SCOPE OF REDUCTIONS FROM WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS REGARDING REDUCTIONS IN THE SECOND STAGE. IN LANGUAGE WHICH APPEARED DELIBERATELY AMBIGUOUS, HE SAID THE EAST WAS "OF THE OPINION" THAT BOTH FIRST AND SECOND STAGE AGREEMENTS SHOULD (A) INCLUDE REDUCTIONS OF BOTH GROUND AND AIR FORCES AS WELL AS ARMAMENTS, INCLUDING NUCLEAR WEAPONS; (B) ENVISAGE REDUCTIONS BY UNITS AND SUB-UNITS; AND WELL AS (C) REALIZATION OF REDUCTIONS BY ALL STATES ON THE BASIS OF EQUAL PERCENTAGES. HE ARGUED THAT REFUSAL OF THE NON-US WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS TO UNDERTAKE "LEGAL" OBLIGATIONS OF GENERAL CHARACTER REGARDING THE TIMING AND SCOPE OF THEIR REDUCTIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A FIRST STAGE AGREEMENT COULD ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD AS REFUSAL TO UNDERTAKE REDUCTIONS.

8. UK REP SAID THAT A JUDGMENT AS TO THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WESTERN PROPOSAL OF DEC 16 MUST BE BASED ON COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF THESE PROPOSALS IN LIGHT OF ALL THE RELEVANT FACTORS, INCLUDING GEOGRAPHY. UK REP SHOWED WHY GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS WERE DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO EVALUATING THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF PROPOSED AGREEMENTS AND THAT GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS AS THEY AFFECTED EACH SIDE WERE NOT OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE, BUT GAVE THE EAST A SIGNIFICANT MILITARY ADVANTAGE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

9. POLISH REP CRITICIZED THE WEST FOR FAILURE TO INCLUDE ARMAMENTS IN REDUCTIONS, CLAIMING IN EFFECT THAT THE COMMUNIQUE AGREED IN THE PREPARATORY TALKS PROVIDED FOR MUTUAL REDUCTION OF ARMS AND ARMAMENTS BY ALL PARTICIPANTS. HE ALSO MADE REMARKS ON PARITY AND DATA CITED ABOVE.

10. CANADIAN REP GAVE THE REASONS FOR THE WESTERN ASSESSMENT THAT THE GENERAL COMMITMENT PROPOSED BY THE EAST FOR A STAGE ONE AGREEMENT WAS IN FACT NOTHING LESS THEN COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE
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BY ALL WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS IN A FIRST STAGE AGREEMENT OF THE ENTIRE EASTERN REDUCTION APPROACH.

11. IN HIS SUMMARY, KHLESTOV AGAIN MADE THE CLAIM THAT THE EASTERN FEB 19 PROPOSAL WAS A SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURE FROM THE ORIGINAL EASTERN PROPOSAL AS REGARDS PHASING. UK REP MADE CASE THAT WESTERN PARTICIPANTS HAD PROPOSED ADEQUATE COMMITMENT REGARDING SECOND PHASE NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID THE WESTN WAS NOT SEEKING AGREEMENT ON A PRINCIPLE THAT ALL REDUCTIONS SHOULD BE ASYMMETRICAL. RATHER, ASYMMETRICAL REDUCTIONS WERE A BY-PRODUCT OF THE FACT THAT THE WEST INSISTED ON AN EQUITABLE OUTCOME, APPROXIMATE PARITY IN GROUND FORCES, THE FACT THAT THERE WAS AN ACTUAL DISPARITY IN GROUND FORCES TO THE FAVOR OF THE EAST, AND OF THE FACT THAT THE EAST HAD IMPORTANT GEOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGES. WHEN ALL THESE FACTORS WERE ACTUALLY TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION,

THE EAST WOULD REALIZE THE CORRECTNESS OF THE WESTERN POINT THAT
THE WEST WAS OFFERING AT LEAST AS MUCH AS IT WAS ASKING FOR.
END SUMMARY.

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